Shirnking Tobacco Business

3582. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that tobacco business in the country is shrinking due to various factors;

(b) whether Government are aware of its adverse impact on the tobacco growing farmers; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government to protect the tobacco farmers by helping them to shift to alternative vocation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) No, Sir. As far as production of FCV tobacco is concerned, there is a steady increase in the overall production of FCV tobacco in the country. However, production of FCV tobacco in black soils is declining while it is increasing in the light soils.

(b) and (c) The Tobacco Board is advising the growers to switch over to alternate crops in the regions where the tobacco produced is of inferior quality or the tobacco cultivation is unremunerative to the growers.

Reduction in Duty

3583. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reduced Duty Entitlement Pass Book rates for cotton textiles; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The Government has reduced Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) rates for textile items including cotton textiles *vide* Public Notice No. 39/2004-09 dated 30.12.2004 issued by Department of Commerce. The details of revised DEPB rates of cotton textile items is given in the following Statement. (*See* below)